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778 346 gourds, seven articles described as plates—white and red, two very large—seven similar but smaller articles, copper cooking vessels, many Shilluk clay pots, and four elephant tusks; sacred water is also kept here. This is the hut which Nyakang himself is thought to visit at [776] night, arriving as a wind; music heard coming from the hut as he plays his lyre (*thom*) is taken as evidence of his presence, and the feeling that he still protects his people is vastly strengthened by these visits. This hut was said to be built by the chief of the Nyelwal sub-district in which is Fenikang.

Wed Mac contains the cooking pots of Nyakang, and here fire is made and food cooked.

Dag, or Kwayo, represents the hut in which Dag slept.

Duwol—also called Nyakang—was the hut before which Nyakang [692] heard disputes, and the *reth* still sits in front of it and hears cases when he visits Fenikang. Mr. Heasty was told that the small children of the village might sleep in this hut when mosquitoes were bad, and at Fenikang it was said that four tusks were kept here.

The *ludi* is stated to be a place for the king, where he may urinate and perhaps bathe.

782 The worship of Nyakang at Fenikang and his other shrines consists of a solemn ritual of sacrifice and prayer. We know of the following 796 occasions for ceremonial worship; no doubt there are others of which we did not hear, and we do not doubt that sacrifice would be made in any threat of national danger or disaster. We give in brief outline accounts of the two most important annual ceremonies:—

[805] 1. The rain-making ceremony held before the rains at the beginning of the month *alabor*, at the new moon (the Shilluk calendar is lunar).

2. The harvest festival held when the millet is cut, i.e. about the end of the rains.

At the rain ceremony a cow and a bullock are given to Nyakang, the latter being killed and the former added to the herd belonging [643] to the shrine. Both should be given by the king, who at the Fashoda shrine himself takes part in the ceremony. The bullock is slain with a sacred spear by one of the *bareth* before the door of the shrine enclosure, while the king stands near the beast praying loudly to Nyakang for rain and holding a spear pointing upwards. After the meat has been eaten by all the *bareth*, the bones and as much blood as can be collected in a gourd are thrown into the river, and the skin is made into a mat for Nyakang. Much of the millet preserved in

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796 the shrine since the beginning of the last harvest is made into beer for this occasion. Our Fenikang informants told us that the king should [643] himself come to their village for this rite, and the above short description is mainly from notes made at Fenikang. But, whatever the theory, the usual practice at the present day is for the king to send the animals given to Nyakang to the shrines, and for the *bareth* to pray for rain as they are sacrificed.

[115] We are indebted to Yangjok, one of the most important of the Shilluk chiefs, for the following account of the rain ceremony as it is held at Acop, where stands one of the *kengo Nyakang*. A bullock, or bull, and a hen are killed before the [793] shrine of Nyakang, each animal being killed by one of the *bareth Nyakang*. Before the ceremony the ground within the shrine enclosure and that outside the fence is swept clean by a number of old women. Drums are placed in the open space near the centre of the village and men and women dance vigorously, first holding spears and other weapons, then raising their hands, singing and praising Nyakang. If there is a tree in the open space the sacrificial bullock is tied to it. At the end of the dance the chief of the district pours water, recently brought from the river, into the hollow of his hand, spits into it, and sprinkles the bullock with this. The bullock is [787] speared high up in the flank, so that the wound is not immediately fatal, and is allowed to go free. If he wanders towards the river it is a good sign, and if he falls on his left side, or goes towards the shrine of Nyakang, it is good, but if he falls on his right side it is bad; in theory the bullock should go to the river and come back to die where he was speared, and it seemed that in practice little difficulty was experienced by the practised Shilluk herdsmen in guiding the victim in the right direction. The beast is skinned and cut up where it [831] falls, and the flesh is boiled and eaten by all except pregnant women and their husbands and men and women who have had intercourse during the previous night. Care is taken not to break the bones, which with all fragments are thrown into the river. The head, one forelimb, and the bowels compose the share of the attendants of the shrine, who cook and eat their portions with the rest of the community. The skin is prepared and used as a mat in the hut of Nyakang, where the sacred spear is kept with which the sacrificial animals are killed.

At the harvest festival it is usual to bring ears of ripening millet and to thrust them into the thatch of certain of the huts constituting

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782 796 the shrine. When the millet is cut everyone brings a portion to the *bareth Nyakang*. This is ground and made into porridge with water brought from the river; some is poured out at the threshold of the hut regarded as specially sacred to Nyakang, and some on the ground within the hut, the outside of which is also anointed with the mixture. Until this has been done no one may eat of the new crop.

643 782 There is a ceremony at the accession of each king, when the newly consecrated ruler should send cattle to each shrine of Nyakang, and also presents of spears and other valuable objects, such as ostrich eggs and elephant tusks. Some of the beasts are sacrificed outside the enclosure, others are added to the herd belonging to the shrine. We have no information concerning the details of this ceremony, but we do not doubt that the flesh of the slaughtered beasts is eaten by the *bareth*.

755 782 When a man is sick he may bring or send a sheep to the nearest shrine of Nyakang, where the attendants sprinkle it with water and spear it. They pray for the sick man, who eats a part of the flesh of the sheep or drinks some of the water in which the meat has been boiled. The rest of the sheep is eaten by the guardians of the shrine and their friends without any ceremony, but the bones and perhaps the intestines are thrown into the river.

782 796 We add an account of a ceremony that took place on 9th December, 1921, at which we were present, premising that our notes were made after, not during, the ceremony and are certainly incomplete:—

[184] When we reached Fenikang at the end of November, 1921, the shrine of Nyakang was being prepared for a ceremony, having for its object the saving of the millet from attacks by flocks of innumerable small birds. A band of women, perhaps as many as forty, had started to clear the area round the shrine, pulling up every weed and blade of grass. Often they would sing, keeping time by clapping their hands; or they would get up and dance slowly round the outside fence of the shrine, and then sitting down would chant another song, occasionally breaking out into cries resembling the Arab *zagharit*. [574] Some of the women were visitors to Fenikang; unfortunately we did not discover whether they had come specially for this purpose, or to which clans they belonged. For the next few days there were always a few women at work weeding, plastering mud, painting the walls, and generally tidying the shrine, or bringing in baskets of sand from outside for the floor of the enclosure.

Although the time was undoubtedly due for the ceremony its

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performance was delayed, the difficulty being the provision of a bull for the sacrifice. It was the duty of the district chief, Dienjok of the Golobogu clan, to provide the sacrifice, but as a certain man from the village of Buru owed him a bull he was endeavouring to obtain this and to kill it for the ceremony instead of taking one from his own herd. How long negotiations might have continued it is impossible to say, for Dienjok, though a chief, was old and feeble and seemed to have little authority in his district. After about a fortnight we announced our intention of leaving, but Aker begged us to remain, and expressed great regret that we should go before the ceremony. We naturally supposed this protest to be formal, and that the village was merely waiting for us to leave in order to perform the sacrifice; however we went with her to the village of Nyelwal where the chief and his assistant and a few old men were assembled. Here Aker harangued the men, frequently making marks on the ground and breaking off pieces of grass and laying them down one by one by way of emphasis and explanation. The conference lasted a long time and she begged us to have patience, seeming certain that she must gain her way. We cannot say how far she went into the matter of the debt from Buru, or if at any time she had any official voice in the affair, but she undoubtedly had the authority of the king behind her and she used it freely. Towards the end of the conference the men's tones had changed completely. Aker announced to us that the ceremony would take place the next day and that Dienjok would provide the bull.

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At dawn next morning the drums were beaten for about half an hour. At 8 a.m. there were no signs of festivity in the village, and women, including Aker's servants, were still at work on the shrine enclosure, smoothing and plastering and removing the smallest weeds. Yet by 2 p.m. probably more than 500 people had assembled and dancing had begun. In the centre of the open spaces to the west of the shrine a large and a small drum were being beaten, the dancers surging in spirals round and away from these. Numbers of older men and women were sitting near the huts on the edge of the dancing-ground, and hundreds of spears were tilted against the thatches, for though all the men came to the village carrying their spears no one held one during the ceremony except Aker, who carried in her left hand a narrow pointed spear, in her right a whip with a double lash, and wore round her head a fringe of black goat-hair. Her cloth was knotted over the left shoulder in correct masculine style. She

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782 793 796 danced alone inside the enclosure of the shrine, and occasionally came out and danced round outside it, her movements resembling those of the men rather than the women dancers. Tune and rhythm were frequently changed, and it was obvious that the figures were traditional. A number of young men wore leopard and other skins suspended from the waist and hanging behind, almost all had decorated anklets and armlets of different kinds, belts of disc beads were worn round the waist, and plumes suspended from the forearms. Head-dresses varied a good deal; the characteristic "Tam o' Shanter", which we remembered as the dominant fashion for young warriors ten years earlier, was only worn by a few, the more popular style apparently being a flat, circular mass of felted hair on either side of the head; a great number had the head shaved and wore a wig or crown of sheep's wool. They carried millet or flowery grass stalks, some had clubs and parrying shields, and the ceremonial bow-derivative covered with strips of metal, called *dang*. Groups of children, decked in whatever finery they could get, took part in the [293] dance, solemnly imitating their elders. The women, who danced in separate contingents, all carried hippo-hide whips, and, more frequently than the men, they left the large dancing-ground and passed in procession round the outside of the shrine enclosure. Whenever the drum ceased the dancing stopped immediately, and the clear note of a kudu horn trumpet could be heard.

After the dancing had continued for some hours Aker was noticed waiting in the *ludi* with a number of men—we believe there were eight—all carrying spears. These were the spears of Nyakang, which had just been brought forth from the hut Kwayo; one large spearhead was covered by a sheath. A bull was led across the dancing-ground and then released, when it sauntered into the shrine enclosure and wandered about unmolested. Aker, carrying her spear, danced within the enclosure, and then left it, and stepping high, danced round the drum, while the men went alone to the khor to wash the spears. The bull was now caught and held outside the entrance to the shrine. Almost before we realized that anything was happening—very quickly, yet without any apparent hurry or confusion—all the guests departed, and the dancing ground was all but deserted; besides Aker and a small group of chiefs and elders, only members of the Golobogu and Pameiti clans remained in the vicinity of the shrine. These men now sat in a row while Aker and Ayurial stood beside the bull, which was held on each side by ropes, a man grasping its tail. One by one

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the men rose and each made a short speech, to which Aker answered; these speeches were appeals to Nyakang not to let the millet suffer from the ravages of the birds. When all had spoken, Awejok, brother's son to Ayurial, stroked the bull's flank with a spear and then thrust it into the beast. Immediately he ran with the spear to the khor to wash it. The wound was oblique and only a few inches deep. The bull was now guided into the enclosure of the shrine, where it was stabbed again with another spear and led into the enclosure of Kwayo while Aker and the chiefs remained just outside. The groans of the dying bull were heard for some time. The chiefs now followed into the courtyard of Kwayo but we do not know whether any of them entered the hut. The flesh of the sacrifice was divided and eaten subsequently by Aker and the men of Golobogu and Pameiti. A band of warriors in full dress bearing their spears now returned to the dancing-ground, danced once round the sacred enclosure, then knelt down and clapped their hands and went silently away. We were told that the spear used to kill the bull was one presented specially by the king; had one of the original spears of Nyakang been used no one could have eaten the flesh of the bull and survived.

It must be noted that before the ceremony we were told that Ayurial was the hereditary bull slayer, but his paternal nephew certainly thrust the first spear; we did not ascertain whether he or Ayurial finally killed and cut up the beast. Probably the matter was of little consequence, as Ayurial was old and Awejok would succeed him. Before the ceremony we were also told that the beast would be stabbed outside the fence but would enter the shrine before dying, and this was so. The sacred character of the spears was a matter of importance; the large spear referred to above was kept sheathed throughout the ceremony until used to stab the bull, thus emphasizing its sacred quality.

So much for what we saw. We were told that the spear would be washed in the holy water kept in the hut Kwayo and that after this it would be taken to the river to be washed. The right forelimb of the bull would be cut off and shown round the village—we believe that this went to Ayuriel—the rest of the beast was Nyakang's and would be taken to Aker's home, there to be eaten by the old men.

Our description of the worship of Nyakang may conclude with a short account of his appearance in animal form, as well as some reference to the cult of his mother Nikaiya, almost as much crocodile

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this time no big dances or festivities should be held. Any small matters arising are dealt with by the most important chiefs, but great affairs must stand over until the appointment of the new king. Meanwhile, the selection of the new king has been going forward; theoretically this is in the hands of the chiefs of the ten districts into which the Shilluk territory is divided, but unofficially many give advice, and there is much intrigue. How far the choice is thought to be inspired is uncertain, but certain portents might occur if the wrong man were chosen, e.g. the effigy of Nyakang, to be described immediately, might become too heavy to be moved, while a method of selection has been described which may be regarded as indicating supernatural sanction. As many small stones as there are candidates are thrown into a fire, and each stone is given a name, the stone of the chosen candidate remaining after the others have burst out of the fire; or, according to another account, the kingship is determined by the colour the stones assume—red (for cattle) or white (for plentiful crops) or red and white. The decision is come to secretly. One of the district chiefs then seeks the king-elect in his village by night and bids him to single combat, really a sham fight; only when he has shown his mettle does the chief signify to him that he has been chosen as sovereign. The king-elect should remain in his village until all is ready for his installation.

Meanwhile messengers have been sent to Akurwa, near the northern limit of the Shilluk country, to bid the Akurwa people bring the sacred four-legged stool from the shrine of Nyakang in their village, and also the effigy called "Nyakang", which is kept wrapped in the common cotton cloth of the Sudan. The effigy, with that of his son Dag, and the sacred stool, are carried southwards towards Fashoda; each night the effigy is placed upon the stool, but by day the objects are borne upon men's shoulders, and as they march the men sing songs commemorating Nyakang and his deeds.[1] The party bearing the sacred objects may seize anything they like on the way, but it seems that their wants are so freely provided for in the villages they pass that they scarcely exercise their prerogative.

As the procession approaches Fashoda the king-elect, with the *ororo*, betakes himself to Debalo village, which he enters treading upon a leopard skin spread for that purpose, and goes directly to a hut

[1] Nyakang appears in a dream to one of the *kurak* of the Akurwa shrine and prescribes the songs to be sung; no doubt among these will be some of those recorded by Hofmayr, *op. cit.*, 403, *et seq.*

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643 796 specially built for him. Here he should stay for about a month (Papit, the present king, stayed only four nights), spending much time in communion with Nyakang, giving many presents though receiving few, and abundantly exercising his right of amnesty.

[372] A ceremonial fire is made by friction, *ororo* and *kwareth* working together, from which brands are taken—by the *ororo* to start a fire in front of the hut in which the king is staying, by the *kwareth* for a fire in the centre of the village, and by commoners for a fire in a millet field near the king's hut. The purpose of these fires—we quote verbatim from Mr. Heasty's letter—is " to keep anyone from taking the king's life before he is crowned ". It is generally said that a brand from one of these fires is carried to Fashoda, but this is not so; Mr. Heasty discovered that the fire-sticks (one an old spear-handle) are carefully wrapped up and taken to Fashoda by the *ororo*, together with offerings of cattle. After the king has reached Fashoda all the fires in the village are put out; a cow is taken to the house of Nyakang as offering, together with the fire-sticks, and by means of the latter a new fire is kindled by the *ororo* and *kwareth*. [787] If this starts quickly it is a good omen and the king will live long; if the fire is long in kindling it is a sign that Nyakang is not well pleased with the new king and that his reign is likely to be short and troubled.

[492] The king-elect is escorted to Fashoda riding a black ox; on reaching the *khor* nearby he stops and awaits the arrival of the party from Akurwa, now swollen to a procession, who approach singing ancient sacred songs. From now on, until the entry to Fashoda, it becomes increasingly difficult to follow details of the ceremony. Mr. Munro's account is most valuable, and is printed as an Appendix, but he points out that the crowd was so dense that he could not see everything. Probably a black ox is sacrificed before the khor (about a quarter of a mile from Fashoda) is crossed, and it seems that there is something in the nature of a sham fight between the party surrounding the king-elect and the folk bringing the effigy of Nyakang from Akurwa. The khor is at last crossed, it being important that the king-elect should not wet his feet, and it appears that there is now a substantial fusion of the two parties—perhaps after a further scuffle. The king-elect, with " Nyakang " near to him, moves forward to Fashoda, and as he does so he treads successively on a sheep lying bound on the ground, on an ox, and in former days on an old man who had been caught by the *ororo* and kept bound and fasting for twenty-four

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hours in the shrine of Nyakang; this old man was smeared with flour, and was so betrodden by the multitude that he usually succumbed.[1] Now, or perhaps at an earlier stage of the ceremony, a girl of about ten is presented to the king-elect by men of *kwa* Okal, a clan traditionally descended from the old inhabitants of the land who became the friends and dependents of Nyakang.[2]

At last the king-elect enters Fashoda, *ororo* on either side of him, and is taken to the shrine of Nyakang, in front of which, its legs held by the *ororo*, is the sacred four-legged stool brought from Akurwa. Upon this is placed the effigy of Nyakang, presumably held in place by an *ororo*; these sacred objects are shielded from the general view by a sheet of cotton cloth held in front and at the sides, the shrine forming a screen behind them. Within the enclosed area are certainly the king-elect, the *nya kwer*, and the man holding "Nyakang"; whether there are others is uncertain. According to one account the king-elect, wrapped in a cowhide, is laid on the ground on a leopard skin in front of Nyakang; he clasps a drum, and the whole assembly beseeches the spirit of Nyakang to protect and bless the new ruler. The *ororo* crouch behind the king, while women, singing and dancing, encircle the recumbent group. Whether these details are accurate or not it is certain that after a short time the statue of Nyakang is withdrawn by the *ororo* from the stool, on which the king now seats himself, remaining motionless in prayer and communion with his ancestors for perhaps a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile water is heated in the specially built temporary "homestead"—consisting we believe of three huts—into which the king will withdraw when he retires from the shrine of Nyakang, and certain of the king's wives wash his feet with hot and with cold water, in order that he may be neither too "cold" nor too "hot" with his people. A bull provided by the *kwa* Ajol has been led before the door of the king's special

[1] There is obviously more ceremonial in connection with this man than we have indicated, or else there were two human sacrifices, but details were not easy to elicit. Aker informed us that the victim would be lying unbound when the king stepped over him, touching him with his right foot as he did so, for if this were not done the country would sicken and fail. This took place near the shrine of Nyakang, apparently as the king approached the sacred stool; the "great ones"—including certainly the *jang duong*—assembled near the shrine and each spat into a bowl of porridge, which was then eaten by the victim, who was left exposed, tied up—or perhaps pegged out—until dead, though it was not expected that he would die the same night. It was said that the victim was not selected from any special clan or place.

[2] This girl, known as the *nya kwer*, attends the king-elect during the ceremonies of installation and later is given in marriage—he does not marry her himself—according to his wishes. *Kwa* Okal formerly received a large payment in spears and cattle for providing this girl. Whether she at one time was taken to wife by the king and in any way resembled the *dak kar* of the Acholi is a matter for future investigators.

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643 homestead, and is speared by an *ororo* after the king has marked it
796 with a spear, or perhaps made passes over it, the beast being dragged away to fall probably outside the shrine of Nyakang.

This brings the installation proper to an end, and the king, waited on by the *nya kwer*, enters the homestead, where he should remain
[775] some ten days in solemn communion with Nyakang whose spirit he now incarnates.

On the tenth night the king is taken by the *ororo* to his rebuilt "palace" on the mound Aturwic, and lives there for a month in retirement. When he comes down from the mound there is again a sham fight, in which he vanquishes his opponent, and he is now the acknowledged king.[1] A beast is sacrificed, and the chiefs present make oration on the rights and duties of the ruler, each emphasizing his words by brandishing his spear and thrusting it into the ground at the close of his speech. The king replies, promises to be a just ruler, to punish wrong and to protect the weak, and dismisses his people after exhorting them to remain true to Nyakang and to their ancient customs.

The three newly built huts which were occupied by the king are broken down (perhaps by the *ororo*) and their fragments thrown into the river.

We believe that the installation of a new *reth* generally takes place about the middle of the dry season. It was said that the Akurwa party and "Nyakang" stay at Fashoda for some time, until about the beginning of the rains. On leaving Fashoda a bullock is sacrificed, and a sheep is killed before crossing every khor on the way back. On arriving at Akurwa four or five of the cattle presented by the *reth* are sacrificed, and the bones thrown into the river.

771 The third element in the Shilluk religion is the cult of ancestors (other than those of the royal family). We confess that we feel unable to set this forth in due proportion and perspective. For
[171] while it is certainly true to say that the ancestral cult is overshadowed by the cult of Nyakang, and that if it ever existed in any such form and degree as among the Dinka it is now but a remnant of what it
[781] once was, yet we are convinced that there is very much more feeling for and fear of dead ancestors than appears on the surface. We have

[1] Papit, the present king, left his temporary homestead on the third night and came down from his palace on the mound the next morning. For a rather confused account of what happened then, given to Mr. Munro by an Egyptian officer—not apparently himself an eye-witness—see Mr. Munro's article (our Appendix) already quoted.

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others one against the sun and his son; vide page 159.

When he felt his end approaching, he assembled all the chiefs of his kingdom for a splendid festival. While all were merry, suddenly a great wind arose, and scattered all those present. In this moment Nyikang took a cloth, wound it tightly round his neck, and thus choked himself.[1]

But many Shilluks firmly believe that Nyikang is still alive. The Rev. Oyler writes to me: "When I asked how Nyikang died, they were filled with amazement at my ignorance and stoutly maintained that he never died. If he dies, all the Shilluks will die. He, *Dāk*, and five other kings ascended to heaven, where Nyikang prays for the Shilluks (!). They say that he disappeared as the wind".

HOW NYIKANG IS ADORED.

Nyikang is the ancestor of the Shilluk nation and the founder of the Shilluk dynasty. He is worshipped, sacrifices and prayers are offered to him; he may be said to be lifted to the rank of a demi-god, though they never forget that he has been a real man. He is expressly designated as "little" in comparison with God.

In almost every village there is a little hut dedicated to Nyikang, or to some other ancient king. In form it is like the common houses, but much smaller and more slender. On its walls sometimes rough drawings in white, red, and black colour are seen, consisting simply in line-ornaments or representing animals. These drawings are made by women, with white, red and black earth, and are renewed every year before the chief prayers are offered. These huts are commonly called *kɛ́ɛ́ ríṭ* "place of the king" i. e. of Nyikang. Besides these small huts they have a number of greater temples, which are in form like the Shilluk-hut, but of much larger size. They are found in most of the villages devoted to Nyikang. These "sacred villages" are, Akuruwar, Wau,[2] Fenyikang, Nyibodo (*Ńibə̄ḍọ*), *Otgṇọ*, Nyelwal, *Oshārọ*, *Otggọ*, *Dɛdiggọ*. These houses, the small as well as the larger, are the places where Nyikang is worshipped. In them, at least in some, a number of reliques are preserved, which are considered holy and are held in great veneration. Among these are a statue of Nyikang made of ambach-wood; the holy spear, drum, and shield of Nyikang, a digging stick, ancient metal ornaments and clothes, etc. Spoils from wars are also dedicated to Nyikang, and are preserved in the temples.

In times of need, when sickness or war are threatening, but above all when rain does not come in due time, the people assemble round the house of Nyikang and pray to him. This is done by dancing and at the same time singing prayers. At the beginning of the rainy season, when they are about to plant dura, the regular chief prayers take place; on this occasion an animal is slain as a sacrifice to Nyikang. Before the transaction of any serious business the elders of the village assemble around the temple of Nyikang, to ask for his counsel.

[1] Till the subjection of the Shilluks by the British all succeeding Shilluk kings have finished their lives by the same form of death.

[2] This Wau is not the place in the Bahr Ghazal Province, but is situated on the left bank of the White Nile between Tanfikia and Kodok.

*539 *ka ţom kāl wọk, ka Chọlọ (Chọllọ) bẹ̀nọ bẹne bẹ̀ne, ká tẹ̀rọ̀ chẹ̀ŋọ̀, ka wēni ki war, ka tẹ̀rọ chẹ̄ŋọ, ka rit a kwach:*

Ya kwache ki mátọ́pọ́, má kula ḍọga. Pen e rẹ́n júr, Lén-dārọ́ che dẹ wẹ̀lọ. Yá kẹ́tá yi mdyẹ́ banda na Ńidwai, Akolọ, nań Ńikāŋọ.

*539 The women come, all of them go to scratch the ground for mud, then they
782 come and besmear the temple of the "king", they prepare the mud, and make
•796 stripes on the temple with red ashes, and with black ashes, and with white ashes, and with soot. When they have finished this drawing, then they dance. After this dura is pounded, a cow is brought, the cow is speared; they bring out the little drum of Nyikango, and all the Shilluks come, and the people dance, and when the night comes, they continue dancing, and (while dancing) they pray to the "king":[1]

"I beg for some little things (food), to put into my mouth. The earth has been spoiled by the people; Lonydaro[2] is travelling (on the earth). I go to our grandfather, the chief of the daughter of Nyidwai, to Akolo, the children of Nyikango."

64. A Religious Ceremony.

796 The people went, the tom (the small drum belonging to Nyikang) was beaten, they danced to the tom; and the people were beaten by the king;[3] it was a very strong drum. When it was finished, the people put the drum on the ground; then they told stories about Nyikang. After that, the people went into the house of the women (or the slaves) (of the king). The spear of Nyikang was brought out, and the people bowed their heads. A sheep was brought, it was killed; the spear of Nyikang was washed with water; the people ran to the river bank. They beat the tom vigorously, then the people came back to dance. After that they scattered. The next day they beat the tom again, the people came again to dance, and after four days they dispersed.

65. How the Cattle is brought across the River.

622 When the chief of a village wants to talk about the cattle, he assembles the
789 people, and addresses them, "Ye people, the grass is finished now, what shall
233 we do concerning the cattle?" The people reply, "Ah, that is your business!" He says, "Well, bring the wizard!" The sorcerer comes, and a goat, a spear, and a hoe are given to him. And he says, "Milk the cows!" And the cows are milked early in the morning. Then he says, "Loosen the cattle!" They take the ambach boats, and the cows come (are tied) behind the ambach boats. The sorcerer ties grass together, and he ties it a second time on the side of the river

[1] the "king" is Nyikang or any other ancient king, to whom the temple is dedicated.
[2] "the army of Daro", perhaps a mythical allusion.
[3] that is, they turned into a state of trance, being possessed by the spirit of the deceased king.

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643 642 [535] reth, no building may be done and the usual burning off of the grass in the early dry season is forbidden.

643 796 [324] [301] During this time also active preparations are on foot for the ceremonies of installation. Iron must be obtained and special ceremonial and presentation spears forged; silver, ivory and ostrich feathers procured for the making of bracelets and other ornaments; a hunting party has to make inroads (either without the knowledge or with the connivance of the government) upon a strictly protected species of antelope in order to obtain the highly prized skins which serve the purpose of purple and ermine in the installation ceremonies. The forging of the sacred spears is introduced with special ceremony; with appropriate sacrifice new fire by the immemorial method of the friction of hard wood upon soft is made and the implements of the blacksmiths blessed.

643 796 778 775 There is great activity during this period of preparation in Akurua in the north of the country, Nyikang's own sacred village. It was from here that the hero-king disappeared in a whirlwind from the sight of mortal man, and it is to Akurua that he returns in order that he may go to Fashoda to install his successor as reth. In the shrine at Akurua are housed the sacred effigies of Nyikang and his son, Dak, which are carried in procession from Akurua to Fashoda for the installation. These effigies consist of heads of ostrich feathers fixed in bamboo sockets, and are in fact fetishes, since the souls of Nyikang and Dak are believed to inhabit them. On the death of a king the old effigies are destroyed and new ones made for the installation of the reth-elect.

643 796 778 [614] When preparations at Fashoda are completed, messengers are sent to Akurua to inform Nyikang that it is time to march to Fashoda. The effigies are then carried out, borne aloft by members of a clan whose special prerogative this is, and start on the journey to the capital, a distance of about seventy miles. The procession moves south at a smart pace. Dak's mop of feathers on the end of a long bamboo pole looks like an oversized feather duster; Nyikang's head of ostrich plumes is very much bigger than that of his son's,

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and the bamboo socket into which it is fitted is shorter and thicker. Behind the effigies are carried Nyikang's 'bed', a long forked stick upon which he is propped at night and a basket of food for his refreshment during the journey. The bearers are surrounded by men of the same clan whose duty it is to keep spectators at a distance, and behind follow Shilluk from the district into which the procession has entered, who act as an escort as far as the next section. The march is kept up at a good pace to the accompaniment of songs sung in honour of Nyikang and Dak. At sunset a halt is made at the nearest large village. Nyikang and Dak are put away for the night, Nyikang being propped up on his 'bed' so that he doesn't touch the ground. His bearers and escort are accommodated in the village, huts being evacuated to receive them and food prepared for them. The next morning the march is resumed, the people flocking to the road from all sides to pay homage to their hero-king as he passes by and joining in the unceasing chants of praise in his honour. Eventually, after some five days on the road, the environments of Fashoda are reached. A village, Adodo, has been set aside for Nyikang and his followers, and they rest there until the day appointed for the installation, about three days hence. During all this time the reth-elect has remained in Fashoda, but when he is informed that Nyikang has arrived at Adodo, he moves away from the capital and takes up his residence at Debalo, a few miles to the south. Nyikang is, as it were, in rightful possession of the territory, and the king-to-be is in the position of an intruder until he has proved his fitness to rule.

Between Fashoda and Debalo lies a long narrow water course, Khor Arepejur. This khor is the traditional boundary fixed by Nyikang himself, between the north and the south. On the morning of the first day of the installation ceremonies, the reth-elect and his followers march towards the khor, the reth leading by the hand a little girl who is his 'bride' and who later will be the cause of a dispute between Nyikang and himself. Arrived at the khor the reth finds stretched out across his path a black bull, over which he steps. (Formerly

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it was an old man who was stretched across the path for the king and his followers to step across. With such a large following, there was more stepping on, than stepping across, and the man was trampled to death.) His partisans follow suit and the whole army crosses the watercourse and marches towards Fashoda. As it does so, the supporters of Nyikang, bearing the two effigies in their midst, are seen approaching from Adodo. The two forces halt a short distance apart, threats are shouted, weapons are brandished—not spears, fortunately, but millet stalks—there is the usual preliminary feinting and dodging and half-hearted rushes, and then the two armies hurl themselves forward and join in the great mock battle. The air is thick with dust raised by the padding feet of the combatants and clouded with flying millet stalks. When the air clears it is seen that the reth is no longer at the head of his forces. His army has been defeated and he has been captured by Nyikang and carried into Fashoda.

Nyikang, closely followed by the reth, advances to an open space in front of the shrine. A cow is sacrificed and then a screen of white cloth is erected in front of the doorway of the shrine, and the sacred stool of Nyikang is placed behind it so as to be hidden from the public view. The effigy of Nyikang is put down upon the stool and a period of chanting and invocation ensues, the reth meanwhile kneeling and clasping the legs of the stool. Then Nyikang is lifted up and carried into the shrine and the reth takes his place on the stool. This is the solemn moment of the installation; it is the equivalent of the crown of kingship being placed on the head of the monarch. The Shilluk believe that at this moment the spirit of Nyikang enters into and takes possession of the body of the reth. After some time spent in communing with Nyikang, the reth, accompanied by his 'bride', who during all this time has never left his side, leaves the place of installation and moves across to a group of huts temporarily erected for his use. Another cow is sacrificed and the king enters one of the huts for the ritual washing of his feet by his wives. This bathing is done in hot and cold water and signifies that the

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king must not be 'hot' or 'cold' with his subjects, but just.

During the rest of the day the king remains in the seclusion of his temporary camp. Towards evening all fires are extinguished and new fire is made by twisting a sharpened stick in a hole made in another stick. The smouldering tinder is fanned into a bright flame, and the sacred fire is carried off to light the fires in the village.

During the next two days the reth remains in seclusion and certain secret rites are performed. On the evening of the second day he leaves his temporary camp and takes up his residence in a hut on an eminence called Aturwic, just outside Fashoda. He is traditionally 'enticed' there by a girl, and for the first time since the commencement of the ceremonies he deserts his young 'bride' who remains behind in the camp. The next morning the king remembers his bride and asks for her. He is told that she cannot be found and he sends messengers to look for her. They return and say that during the night Nyikang has come and carried her off. The king then sends to Nyikang demanding the return of the girl, but Nyikang flies into a rage and calls his army together to punish this impertinence. Nyikang and Dak now appear outside the shrine where they have lain since the morning of the installation and are joined by a third effigy, Nyikang's second son Col, who is composed of grey ostrich feathers and rope. The three effigies surrounded by their followers now aroused to a pitch of excitement by continuous drumming and dancing, advance towards Aturwic and the king and his *entourage* descend from the mount to meet the aggressors. The king advances boldly towards his opponents and hurls his millet stalk 'spear', which is a signal for a general onrush by his supporters. This time it is Nyikang who is vanquished. The 'bride' is snatched away from him and hurried up the mount to safety and in vain do the warriors of Nyikang counter-attack to recover her. At length they fight their way to the foot of the mound but then Nyikang calls a truce and quietly ascends the eminence accompanied by his sons. Apparently all is settled amicably. The reth has proved

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643 796 himself a worthy successor of his great ancestor; Nyikang reappears and goes back to his shrine where he remains until he returns to Akurua.

The concluding ceremonies take place the following day when the chiefs from all over the country gather to do fealty to their new king. The king, seated on the sacred stool of Nyikang, faces the assembled chiefs. Each one comes forward [537] in turn carrying a spear. He makes a speech of praise and exhortation, and at the conclusion drives his spear into the ground to signify that he will never raise it against the king. The king replies briefly to the gathering, thanking the chiefs for their protestations of loyalty and promising to rule justly. [782] After the assembly a bull is sacrificed, and the reth makes a tour of inspection of Fashoda. He pauses outside his father's house, a sheep is stretched out before the threshold, he steps over it and disappears into the interior. He has come into his own.

All over the country there is a general feeling of buoyancy and relief. The shadow is lifted from the land. Nyikang is among his people again . . . long live the king!

643 797 Perhaps I may be pardoned if to this account of the position, the installation and death of the reth, I add a few words on the death of one of the recent kings, Papiti, because of the interest it has for our mission and its work. Papiti must be one of the longest lived of Shilluk kings. The twenty-ninth in succession from Nyikang, he was the son of Yor who had been hanged by the Mahdists in Kodok. He was elected king in 1917, and died in 1943; thus his reign extended over a period of twenty-six years.

From the time of the accession of King Papiti dates the [798] prosperity of the Catholic missions in the Shilluk country, or at least dates the time when they ceased to suffer persecution at the hands of the Shilluk and were permitted to live and do their work in peace, for Papiti had always shown himself a firm friend of the missionaries. He was a frequent visitor to the mission at Lul and often sent presents of hippopotamus fat, a rare delicacy, and butter. It was his authority and good

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Chapter IX

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

796 I suppose that nowhere in the world do the important events which the newspapers group together under this heading go without some kind of celebration to mark them. The Shilluk are in this no exception to the rest of mankind. The importance of these occasions in human life and in the life of the tribe are recognized by them and made the occasion of traditional ceremonies, elaborate sometimes and exacting. Especially does the birth of the first-born child call [844] for celebration, since by proving the fertility of the marriage it gives hope of the founding of a new family and the continuance of the tribe.

000 As the time for the arrival of the first-born draws near any young married couple of whatever race or country is filled with conflicting emotions of hope and fear, assurance and doubt, joyful anticipation and misgiving. In communities more sophisticated than the Shilluk, the young expectant mother and her friends spend many happy hours making or purchasing the multitude of garments in which it is considered essential that a baby should be swathed, whilst the anxious father-to-be treats his wife as though she were some 844 delicate and rare piece of china. The Shilluk have their own very decided ideas about the place of the husband during this very important function of the birth of the first child. It cannot be tolerated that he should be continually in the way of busy women during, and for a considerable period before and after, this time, so he must keep his distance, the distance being that between his village and that of his wife's [591] parents from which he brought her at the time of their marriage. Custom decrees that about the sixth month of her 843 pregnancy the young Shilluk wife must leave her husband's roof and 'go home to mother'. Father is callously left to